

WASHINGTON, DC - Today, Congressman Rob Wittman joined members from both sides of the aisle to oppose the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which lacks a clear strategic blueprint for the funding plans and priorities of the Department of Defense. Wittman pointed to a number of flawed elements of the legislation which lacks a 30 year shipbuilding plan, an aviation plan, a plan to appropriately address Guantanamo Bay detainees, and cuts the Nation's land based missile systems by \$1.2 billion, creating a hole in our missile defense plan. The NDAA ultimately passed by a vote of 281-146.

"This legislation represents the broken process that the culture of Washington has fostered. Here we are voting to authorize tax dollars for long term plans that don't exist. We ought to return to the drawing board and adequately address both the short term needs of our service men and women and the long term issues facing our National defense," said Wittman.

Wittman highlighted the Senate's reinstatement of \$46 million to pay for dredging at Naval Station Mayport in Florida. The House-passed version did not include those funds. This authorization comes before the Quadrennial Defense Review which is set to address the issue of dredging and the possible transfer of a nuclear aircraft carrier from Norfolk, Virginia to that installation.

"We're setting a dangerous precedent in this bill, where we're allocating dollars without a clear strategic purpose in mind. Any sort of authorization of this magnitude should be consistent with planning for the Quadrennial Defense Review set for next year," added Wittman.

Additionally, the legislation includes an expansion of federal jurisdiction over hate crimes. Historically, this annual bill has focused on the authorization of funds for the Department of Defense, military operations and personnel. In July, the U.S. Senate attached a non-germane amendment which focused on enhancing hate crime laws.

"While I am adamantly opposed to any sort of physical harm against another, whether motivated by hate or for any other reason, I am deeply concerned that this expansion of jurisdiction will have a chilling effect on the expression of legitimate religious beliefs. In typical Washington fashion, this bill was politicized to serve narrow purposes, rather than the broader goal of providing for our military," said Wittman.

Congressman Rob Wittman represents the First District of Virginia. He was elected to his first full term in November 2008 and serves on the Natural Resources Committee and the Armed Services Committee where he is the Ranking Member of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.